reach the foundation. In some respects, it affords a worse basis on which to raise a superstructure than the surface patent to all would have done ; and it is utterly insecure, because it has not gone down to the rock. It has just a sufficient amount of truth to be plausible. And so far as advanced merely with the view of keeping us from committing foolish actions, in the hope that God will interpose to preserve us from the natural consequences, so far as it is used for the purpose of preventing persons from tempting Providence, (to use the language of a very different school,) it may be made as useful as it is unquestionably sound. But if meant, as it obviously is, to keep us from putting confidence in Divine providence, and feeling our close and immediate dependence upon it, it cannot be condemned in language sufficiently strong: for it would rob many of some of their deepest and most abiding consolations, and foster in others a spirit of pride and rebellion. Nor is it difficult to detect the error which lurks beneath a superficial plausibility. We expect not the Eternal to change his laws; but it is because they have been so wisely arranged that they do not need to be changed—arranged so as to accomplish all and each of his purposes. We do not expect Etna to recall her fires when a sage is near ; or the air and ocean to acquire new motions to preserve a saint from danger ; for if the sage has been contending with the laws which he professes to observe, or if the saint has been despising what he should regard as the " ordinances of heaven/' it may be the will of God that these very powers should be the means of destroying him. But should these individuals not be rushing recklessly against the known laws of heaven, or should it be the will of God to preserve them, it will be found that provision has been made for their escape ; and that not through the powers of nature disobeying their own laws, but through other powers

in nature opportunely interposing to stop, to turn aside, or otherwise to modify their operation. The volcano may burst, the tempest may rage, and the cliff may fall, an instant before or an instant after the time when these events might have been followed with fatal consequences; or some passing impulse of feeling may have hurried the individual away; or some other agent of nature may have hastened to shelter or defend him, and all by a special arrangement intended by God from the very beginning.